Minutes of the

Meeting of the Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches

Video Conference, 15 July

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I. Welcome and Opening Prayer

Dr Agnes Abuom (Anglican Church of Kenya), moderator of the central committee, welcomed the participants to this meeting with a limited and specific agenda, namely to decide how to monitor and prepare the next assembly, to record a decision on the Kyoto sale and to consider a revised 2021 budget.

She thanked the members of the executive committee who worked hard to prepare the agenda of the central committee meeting in June. The hard work produced good results. She thanked God for sustaining us in our work.

The moderator called on Rev. Dr Mikie Roberts to lead the prayers, praying with and for people and churches in Ethiopia and Eritrea. The reading was Psalm 141 and the prayer closed with the Our Father.

II. Opening Actions

Dr Abuom moderated the decision session. A quorum of 18 executive committee members present was confirmed.

Mr Douglas Chial gave a brief overview of the agenda of the meeting reminding the committee of the protocols for participating in a meeting by video conference.

The committee approved its agenda.

As agreed by the executive committee at its meeting 17-20 May 2021 and following the meeting of the Green Village steering committee on 17 June 2021, the acting general secretary, on 22 June, launched an electronic consultation and decision making, with a seven-day notice period.

Further to the recommendations of the steering committee, the executive committee was requested to:

1. approve the sale of the Kyoto land plot and project to OikosInvest Foundation;
2. delegate to the steering committee the responsibility to confirm to the leadership of the central committee (LCC) that the listed conditions have been met prior to executing the deed of sale; and
3. decide that the sale will take place, when the conditions have been reported as met by the steering committee, under signature of the moderator, one of the vice-moderators and the acting general secretary, or given current conditions, as delegated under power of attorney by all three.

Documentation provided included the list of the conditions to be met, as defined by the steering committee, and an outline of the transaction and contractual documents. The consultation concluded after seven days on 29 June with 20 members participating and expressing agreement with the recommendations thus fulfilling the two-thirds threshold required by Rule XVIII.8 to conclude the decision-making.

The decision above was approved by the executive committee and is officially recorded in these minutes.

Dr Abuom thanked the members for their participation in this decision.

III. Reflection on Central Committee

The committee met in a hearing session and the moderator offered her thoughts on the first online meeting of the central committee. The leadership of the central committee were keen to hear the reflections of the members on their experience with the online meeting. She remembered the worry that there would not be a quorum and was thankful that the threshold of participation had been reached. It would have been better to have broader participation, but this can be discussed later. With regard to the standing committee meetings, she participated in the programme committee. The document on human sexuality, which has not yet been shared with the central committee, took up the time of the standing committee though it was not on the agenda. The executive committee reflections will be helpful for planning the next meeting of the central committee whether it meets online or in-person.

She continued saying that the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated inequalities and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 agenda was not in the programme of the meeting. This is critical as previously implemented social economic developments are now being reversed. The SDGs may not be realized because of the state of economies where levels of poverty have really increased. This was heard in the sharing from the regional meetings. How can the whole issue of faith communities and their leadership that is really upholding the lives of individuals be brought to the fore? In this context, our church leaders are paying a high price, as they try and lift up the spirits of the people. It is actually faith that is providing that sustenance of hope, that aspiration and prayer that the current distress and suffering will not continue and that there will be a way out of the pandemic.

At the meeting the centrality of health and healing, both for now and post-pandemic, came out and becomes very critical. As a result of the pandemic, humanitarian crises are on the rise. The resource level for addressing even humanitarian crises is very low. ACT Alliance, for instance, was only able to get 30% of their appeals for the Horn of Africa. The issues of trauma, isolation, and mental health are becoming recognized concerns and are areas where the member churches and ecumenical bodies can contribute to the creative thinking by governments and inter-governmental bodies. The ecumenical movement could be a voice in a positive direction in the public sphere on these issues.

She noted that the central committee meeting took place after a long time since the last meeting – three full years. She wished there could have been more time to chat with one another, outside the official sessions. This need will be taken into account for future online meetings.

The acting general secretary, Rev. Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca added his impressions of the meeting.

He echoed the apprehension of the moderator that the meeting would not reach quorum and was happy for the participation of the members. He felt the meeting was successful for four reasons:

1. The agenda was limited and this was a wise decision of the executive committee. Had the agenda been longer, the meeting would have run out of time.
2. While the meeting was online, the moderator and one of the vice-moderators were present in Geneva. This made the coordination significantly easier.
3. The percentage of time in the agenda for prayer was doubled compared to other meetings. This, plus the sharing from the regions in plenary, helped to ensure participation and strengthen fellowship. After the regional sharing the moderator paused and asked for a prayer. Even outside the times for prayer the central committee members prayed. It was a very spiritual and prayer-based meeting.
4. Before the meeting the secretariat asked members about their experience with online meetings and their technical needs, offered practice opportunities and tried to find solutions for those with limited access to internet.

He expressed his thanks to the team that worked on this with the members.

In terms of how this online meeting compared to the previous in-person central committee meetings, he shared with the committee that there were almost as many members and presidents present in this online meeting as the last two in-person meeting.

2016 Trondheim	133 members and presidents
2018 Geneva	127 members and presidents
2021 Online	124 members and presidents

He added that the evaluation is underway and will be shared with the executive committee in November. In general, there was positive feedback from the responders. However, the most frequent comment was that only a few members dominated the discussion. This is unfortunately the same for in-person meetings.

The moderator thanked the acting general secretary for his comments and opened the floor for discussion.

Ms Emily Evans (Uniting Church in Australia) affirmed Fr Sauca's four points. She also felt there should be more thought for the next meeting around social coffee time catch-ups and sharing among the members. Having the agenda breakdown minute-by-minute was very helpful. She felt the staff team had done well and that, considering the situation, the meeting had gone well.

H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr Nifon of Targoviste (Romanian Orthodox Church) also said that the central committee plenary meetings were a great success. He felt that the members had a sense of togetherness and it was a positive experience. He continued by saying that for the WCC, online governing body meetings cannot continue. The WCC needs person-to-person fellowship meetings. Though an online meeting is better than nothing he felt strongly that every effort should be made to hold the executive and central committee meetings in-person.

Bishop Dr Mary Ann Swenson (United Methodist Church), vice-moderator of the central committee, was very moved by the reports of the regional meetings. This was a reminder of the extent of ecumenical work around the world. Listening to and hearing from each other from all over the world was a very important part of the meeting.

Bishop Simo Peura (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland) felt the meeting was a positive experience and was surprised that it worked so well. He said that the leadership of the central committee and the staff had done excellent work. He echoed the desire of H.E. Metropolitan Nifon to have in-person meetings. For online meetings the number of participants can be lower, if people think it is not necessary to be there, then there will be difficulties with quorum.

Rev. Karin van den Broeke (Protestant Church in the Netherlands) thanked the staff for the organization of the central committee meeting. It was great to see how the committee could meet under very special conditions. Decisions were needed by the central committee and these were made; the committee followed the agenda and this was very positive. However, the importance of a central committee meeting is more than only making well-prepared decisions. We also need the experience of fellowship and sharing spirituality. It is difficult to have inspiring meetings in which spirituality and theological reflections are shared. If it is necessary to have another online meeting, some thought must go into how to encourage theological reflection and spiritual sharing in such a meeting.

Rev. Dr Samson Ayokunle (Nigerian Baptist Convention) congratulated the staff who hosted the central committee. A central committee meeting had never been prepared in this way so that it was a new experience for everyone. It was a gamble but it was a successful meeting and we thank God for that. The business of the meeting was accomplished. He also congratulated and thanked the moderator and vice-moderators of the central committee as well as the acting general secretary who was more than ready for his first meeting in his current role. This gave the meeting smoothness and instilled confidence in the members.

He added that one of challenges with online meetings is that the members, though they are occupied in the meeting, are still frequently called on by their local staff as they are still present at home. Members may even be tempted to schedule other meetings during the central committee. He said that the council needed to be bold – keeping the proper precautions – but also daring to meet in-person for the sake of the fellowship.

Mrs Anne Glynn-Mackoul (Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East) also expressed some surprise that things had gone so well. She encouraged the other executive committee members to fill in the evaluation form in a detailed manner. This would be helpful to the working group on constitution and rules which will be meeting to specifically discuss meetings by electronic means.

Rev. Dr Hyunju Bae (Presbyterian Church of Korea) shared her appreciation for a well-prepared meeting. She also very much appreciated the younger people's leadership in this meeting, e.g. Ms Evans led the liturgy for the Asia regional meeting; Ms Miriam Weibye (member) moderated, and Ms Hanbeet Rhee (advisor) presented the report of the communications committee; and younger members of the assembly planning committee (APC) were involved in presenting the report of the APC.

Dr Abuom agreed that the younger members did very good job and that this should be highlighted.

IV. Monitoring Preparations for the Assembly

The committee continued in hearing session.

The committee had received several documents for the discussion including a fact sheet on COVID-19 and a proposed framework for monitoring assembly preparations. The documents referred to three possible scenarios for holding the assembly:

1. Scenario A: 4,500 people on the Festplatz (venue). This is the preferred option and the APC scenario for planning, budgeting and logistical work. An estimation of the probability of this scenario is approximately 80% with current information, projections and trends, i.e. vaccinations, travel and sanitary measures. With this scenario, online/virtual presence maintained at approximately 1000 people.
2. Scenario B: 3,000 people on the Festplatz (venue). An estimation of the probability of this scenario is approximately 15% with current information, projections and trends, i.e. vaccinations, travel and sanitary measures. With this scenario, online/virtual presence is increased with approximately 2300 people.
3. Scenario C: 1,900 people on the Festplatz (venue). An estimation of the probability of this scenario is approximately 5% with current information, projections and trends, i.e. vaccinations, travel and sanitary measures. With this scenario, online/virtual presence is increased with approximately 3,400 people.

Mr Doug Chial summarized several points from the COVID-19 fact sheet shared with the executive committee.

For the worldwide COVID-19 situation:

- There have been 4 million deaths, 187 million infections, 4 variants of concern and the spread is not slowing down;
- The vaccine is critical for protection of all; 3.42 billion doses have been given, with 80% in the 'developed' world;
- The World Health Organization (WHO) is providing support in terms of putting together a mass gatherings team; their advice is that as WCC moves forward we should collect information on the participants' health profile;
- The situation is unfortunately fluid and changing, depending on the evolution of the variants and vaccine distribution.

In Germany

- Entry is allowed without quarantine for most countries with proof of vaccination, a negative PCR test or proof of recovery;
- Currently there is a 14-day quarantine for those coming from virus variant areas: Botswana, Brazil, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Uruguay;

- 42% of the German population is fully vaccinated with 58% having received only one dose (48 million);
- Public events are taking place but people must wear masks;
- Currently the levels allowed for the assembly venue are 60% capacity in the Garden Hall (plenary); scenario C with 1,900 participants; and the Festplatz where worship will take place can handle 1,900 people.

Fr Sauca spoke to the committee saying that the executive is aware of WCC concerns and has been managing risks for assembly, the central and the executive committee meetings. The assembly has been postponed once already and further postponement will have negative consequences. The COVID-19 pandemic will continue. The WCC must ensure that delegates and official participants will be able to travel to and enter Germany. This means everyone should be encouraged to get vaccinated. Around the world, currently the vaccination process is unjust and this is a significant problem. Vaccine hesitancy is also a serious challenge. For the assembly WCC will ensure that the venues are safe to avoid risk of being a source of viral transmission – the assembly should rather be a space of grace.

This means planning has to proceed with different scenarios of restriction. It is not possible to predict with certainty what the situation will be in one year. We can hope and assume it will be better and there is no evidence right now that the situation would be worse. Though we may have more online participation than ever before, it is impossible to accept hybrid decision-making. For this reason there is no choice but to manage a lot of risk as we move forward in the preparations. There are risks in

- Holding the assembly as planned;
- Postponing the assembly;
- Limiting participation;
- The budget, though this is not the topic for today's meeting; will we raise enough money, will we be able to spend the grant from the German government this year; will we have another grant from a newly elected German government next year?

Risk management is a strategy of good governance and, in preparing an assembly, WCC would be managing many risks with or without COVID-19.

He felt that the worst case scenario is that we have to limit how many people can come to the assembly; we could hold a constitutional assembly with only delegates and official participants. The best case scenario is not that we have a large or small assembly, but that we ensure a safe assembly where our member churches give direction for our journey together as an expression of unity in Christ and witness to the world.

Dr Abuom thanked the acting general secretary and asked Bishop Petra Bosse-Huber (Evangelical Church in Germany) to share the perspectives from Germany.

Bishop Bosse-Huber welcomed the exchange on conditions and opportunities for the assembly to take place in Karlsruhe in 2022. The pandemic is attacking worldwide. From the host committee which includes not only churches in Germany, but also Switzerland and France, it is necessary that in every step taken, to look beyond Europe and to the world so that no church falls out of the community. This does not make the task any easier.

We all want to celebrate and hold the assembly as planned by APC, the executive and central committees, that is, with 5,000 participants and additional visitors. At this point we cannot know whether we will succeed. No one can predict the development of the COVID-19 pandemic, but we can analyse the situation more closely and regularly check how it is developing. A proposal for a monitoring framework has been received by the executive committee with a schedule that checks the legal and health regulations which are constantly changing. Monthly online meetings are proposed to review the latest worldwide data on the pandemic, the situation in Germany and in Europe.

From the point of view of the host committee there are three matters of great concern:

1. It is important to observe the developments in the field of vaccination; at the moment there is no reason for great hope when one considers the global situation which is once again characterized by a blatant injustice in the distribution of vaccines and their production; this was addressed clearly in the executive committee's statement in May
   > "We call upon all with the power to address the lamentable injustice and inequity revealed by the pandemic — governments, agencies, religious leaders, boards and leaders of corporations with ownership of patents and materials — to exercise leadership and act together urgently to ensure broad, rapid, equitable and affordable distribution of therapeutics and vaccines worldwide, to overcome this failure and to right this wrong."

   Vaccination will be essential for entry requirements, not only for Germany but for all of Europe;

2. The timing and process of deciding what type of assembly we can allow and plan for is critical; as of today only scenario C would be realistic with 1,900 participants at the venue; when would be the right time to move from C to B or A; when would we have to realise and decide all the precautionary measures to decide that an assembly would not be possible even with scenario C; how would this look financially;

3. It would be a big disappointment for the host committee and the European churches if the assembly had to be cancelled or postponed again; despite the postponement from 2021 to 2022 the anticipation is still very high and in many churches and organizations, including the parishes, there is a great sense of wanting to pick up speed after the summer vacation.

She continued saying that invitations to delegations and guests to come and visit before or after the assembly are already planned. The expectation is that the guests can come and enjoy the hospitality and that a real ecumenical exchange and mutual learning can take place. A WCC assembly is always an enrichment and a gift to all who take part. This time it will be possible in an unprecedented virtual format too, especially for the host churches which are being transformed by the assembly. Sometimes this is only noticeable after a while but so valuable that we as a host committee will do everything in our power to ensure that the entire WCC fellowship does not lose this special opportunity.

Dr Abuom thanked the bishop and other presenters in this session. The acting general secretary had outlined risks and the executive may want to reflect on these. His last statement was very important – we want a safe assembly no matter which scenario is possible – so that

there is moment of real sharing and of course the revival and strengthening of the ecumenical fellowship. We have heard from the host church about their expectations, their anticipation and the concerns around who can enter the country. It is clear that people need to be vaccinated in order to enter Germany. She echoed the risk that there would be disappointed churches and the fellowship if the assembly were to be cancelled.

After a short break H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr Gennadios of Sassima (Ecumenical Patriarchate), vice moderator of the central committee, moderated a hearing session.

Returning to the assembly discussion and in response to a question, he confirmed that the German elections would take place on Sunday, 26 September. He expressed his thanks to Fr Sauca and Bishop Bosse-Huber for their reflections on the scenarios. He said that for the moment there is no need to discuss any kind of postponement. It is hoped that the situation will improve so that at least a constitutional assembly may take place. The APC will work on the scenario C at their meeting in October this year. That will be ten months before the assembly and that is a long period given that the situation is changing daily. For the moment we are working according to scenario C as if the assembly would take place under current circumstances. Preparations need to ensure everyone has a safe travel, atmosphere and context at the assembly.

He asked about entry to Germany for those needing a visa. It would be very unfortunate if the participation of some delegations was hindered because of visa denial. Bishop Bosse-Huber responded that the host committee has been working very closely with the foreign ministry already from the time that Karlsruhe was chosen as the assembly venue. She added that it is important for participants to get vaccinated as this goes together with the visa application. She assured the committee that the German hosts would do everything possible to ensure visas for all who need them.

H.E. Metropolitan Nifon asked about the scenarios and, if the situation improves, how to move from scenario C to B. He asked the acting general secretary about what WHO was saying in terms of likelihood of improvement. Delegates are asking about documents to prepare for the assembly, so if scenario C works as is currently possible, then they need not be disappointed. In spite of the circumstances we have to encourage people and put some optimism into this great event of the WCC.

Bishop Bosse-Huber explained that at the moment, only scenario C is possible because of national and European regulations. In Germany there is an increasing number of ill people despite the high rate of vaccination because of the Delta variant. Around 42%, almost half, of the German population has been vaccinated.

Fr Sauca said that in the conversations with the WHO they do not discuss probabilities but rather that vaccines are needed to stop the spread of the virus and limit the number of cases. They plan to publish new mass gathering recommendations soon.

Mr Chial was invited to present the Monitoring Framework (Doc. No. 03)

This proposal outlines a process for continuing to monitor the planning for the assembly in the context of a global pandemic with two primary interests around travel and safety. Two

conditions that are necessary for holding the assembly are 1) entry with vaccine, negative PCR test results, or proof of recovery and 2) working with different scenarios for public health and safety.

The timeline proposed includes regular monthly reviews with LCC and the leadership of the local host committee to assess if there is a change in the situation and in what direction it is changing. The meetings of the executive and central committees are critical moments in terms of the decision-making towards limiting participation or postponing the assembly.

The framework also includes indicators: what are the worldwide statistics; what are the national constraints, who is living in a country whose government would prohibit leaving or returning; what is the situation in Germany with regard to vaccination, to requirements for meetings (the expectation is that these continue changing and moving); observing the ecumenical events scheduled between June and October 2022 and whether any of them are moving towards postponement or limiting participation; and the individual capacity to access vaccines or testing which is required to attend.

The mitigation measures include careful budget work and review. Different budget scenarios were developed for the assembly, even before the pandemic. Cancelation policies and contracts are important for this. There is a need not only for a security plan but also a health and security plan anticipating needs such as an on-site testing mechanism, some health hubs, space for distancing, use of masks, the way that food is served, the way that one queues in a line, etc. All of these are listed as ways of understanding how we adapt to scenario B or C if either of those are necessary next year.

The proposal to switch scenarios will be made through the monitoring of the LCC and the leadership of the host committee in their regular sessions over the next months.

The moderator of the session thanked Mr Chial for the presentation of the document and opened the floor for discussion.

Mrs Glynn-Mackoul asked about whether the assembly would only be cancelled if Germany prohibited visitors, the European Union instituted prohibitions against travel or that the WHO published new advice against any global travel. Would WCC cancel the assembly if delegations from certain countries could not participate? Are we anticipating a process of discernment where we might consider cancelling it even if other travel is permitted? Or would we hold the assembly (scenario C) even if some could not attend?

Fr Sauca added that people from most of the countries where the member churches are located can travel at this time.

H.E. Metropolitan Gennadios said that the question was relevant but that it was too early to respond now. The question should be kept in mind.

Dr Abuom said that scenario C includes delegates and official participants in the assembly. The 2,000 others who normally come as guests, as assembly participants, as ecumenical conversation facilitators, etc. would be sorely missed. However, if we do not hold an assembly, what will it do to the spirit and momentum of ecumenism and ecumenical

fellowship? This is especially important at this time when many are closing in to themselves, both individuals and nations. As we move forward, scenario C is the last resort which would enable us to bring together the fellowship to some extent. That means that all the member churches could participate on some level.

Fr Sauca reminded the committee of the Canberra assembly in 1991, where, because of the first Gulf War, several delegations did not participate. The assembly still was held. It is up to the executive committee to decide, if, because of the few exceptions, the assembly should be cancelled. He reiterated that the fellowship particularly needs an assembly at this time.

Ms Evans affirmed the framework presented and the process of monitoring. She felt it would be important to communicate what is happening in this regard to the fellowship, to those who are preparing to go the assembly. She asked about the messaging strategy over the next few months. She wondered if there was any hesitancy by member churches on participating and how this is being managed.

Rev. Karin van den Broke asked about the possibility for hybrid way of decision-making for scenario C. If decisions are made only by those present then this means some of our churches are excluded from decision-making.

Rev. Everdith Yaritza Landrau (Presbyterian Church [USA]) worried that the current outbreak of the Delta variant could be even more devastating. In the USA this has already been causing a lot of sickness and deaths. She asked whether, in the drafting of these scenarios, another wave or outbreak of the virus was considered. The churches and the fellowship have fewer resources and vaccinations have not been available in many areas. The question of inequity and disparity in getting vaccinated should be considered as the different scenarios are discussed.

Mr Chial responded that the two staff members who are medical doctors, Dr Mwai Makoka and Dr Manoj Kurian, had consulted with WHO about the variants. The Delta variant spreads faster so it can have a greater impact. The current vaccinations work against that variant. For this reason WHO's message is for everyone to get vaccinated. WHO is also one of the biggest advocates for just access to vaccines. While there may be countries receiving fewer vaccines and countries receiving no vaccines, the countries that we are familiar with where our member churches are, are receiving vaccines. The social media posts of many of our church leaders show them getting vaccinated.

A key input from Dr Makoka is that a significant number of our delegates are coming from major urban centres. Distribution is occurring at a more rapid rate in urban centres and even when there are fewer vaccines, many of our members are included in the priority groups. On the advice of the WHO, as registration is opened, it is also planned to open a health profile for everyone so that we can understand and begin very early to encourage everyone to get vaccinated. There may be another wave, a new variant may appear, but the framework is based on solid evidence from the situation now. It is hoped that the number of countries with travel restrictions will continue to decrease.

In response to a question about mandatory vaccinations to participate in the assembly, Mr Chial referred the committee to the document which points to three possible requirements

for entry – vaccination, proof of recovery, or a negative PCR test. France has made incentives for getting vaccinated by requiring a health pass to go to restaurants and attend cultural events. Registration for the assembly will open in September. “Have you been vaccinated?” will be added to the usual questions. It is important to get the information directly from the participants and develop a health profile for each.

Bishop Simo Peura said that vaccination is the only way forward and that a 14-day quarantine for assembly participants would be impossible. He asked, if participants find it difficult to access the vaccines in their own country, whether WCC or the German hosts could help out in any way.

The acting general secretary and Bishop Bosse-Huber both responded that requests had been made to the ministry of foreign affairs in Germany on this issue. They responded that if they were to facilitate such vaccinations for the Council, e.g. through their representation in various countries, they would then be obliged to do the same for others. This would mean many organizations from businesses, to sports competitions. The German authorities said that they have such services for their staff in foreign service, but would not want to favour any group over another coming to Germany.

H.E. Metropolitan Nifon said that WCC’s position should be for vaccination. In the light of the clarification of Bishop Bosse-Huber, he felt that a letter should be sent from WCC to advise the delegates and participants to do whatever they can to get vaccinated. It is not compulsory but there should be a strong recommendation from the Council.

The committee moved into a decision session.

The proposed action that

The executive committee discuss, amend and receive the proposed framework for monitoring preparations for the assembly in the context of a global health pandemic; and ask the acting general secretary to implement the proposed timeline and coordinate the ongoing assessment with the WCC assembly office and Karlsruhe assembly logistics office.

was approved by consensus.

H.E. Metropolitan Seraphim also asked that some time in an executive committee meeting be dedicated to discussing the themes for the ecumenical conversations at the assembly. He noted that some proposals from the Commission on Education and Ecumenical Formation were not taken into account.

V. Revised Budget 2021

Bishop Mary Ann Swenson moderated a decision session.

Ms Elaine Dykes presented the revised budget 2021 (Doc. No. 04) to the committee. The profile of the revised budget 2021 was prepared in accordance with the executive committee's guidance in May, and would provide a good means for reporting to the funding partners on work in 2021, having been adapted for the continuing changing circumstances.

In November 2020, when the original budget 2021 was approved, the length of the period of travel ban which has continued throughout this year was not anticipated. The revised budget has addressed the following topics with different impacts:

- Contributions income update for continuing COVID impacts
- Assembly preparatory activities
- Bossey hotel and conference centre
- Kyoto financial plan (basis for steering committee recommendations of 17 June 2021)

Revised budget 2021

CHF 000	Draft revised	Approved 11/20	*inc/(dec)*
Membership & other unrestr contributions	3,502	3,630	*(128)*
Programme contributions	11,741	12,251	*(510)*
Assembly contributions	1,833	412	*1,421*
Land and project sales	42,034	26,491	*15,543*
Other income	5,377	5,632	*(255)*
Total income	**64,487**	**48,416**	***16,071***
Programme	5,110	6,049	*(939)*
Assembly	1,571	661	*910*
Building project	15,775	7,741	*8,034*
All other	5,387	5,388	*(1)*
Staff costs	11,716	11,996	*(280)*
Total expenditure	**39,559**	**31,835**	***7,724***
Net surplus	24,928	16,581	*8,347*

The revised budget includes no programme deficits. With the adjustments made, there is still a balanced budget. All programme expenditure is covered by income or available funds. The revised budget has CHF 64.5 million of income, 39.6 million of expenses and a hope of almost CHF 25 million surplus. This latter amount is related to the expected Kyoto transaction.

The revised budget includes a CHF 500,000 net decrease in programme contributions, as well as an estimated CHF 100,000 decrease in membership and other unrestricted income. There are some additional reductions in other income with impact on the programme budget.

Assembly contributions reflect an increase of CHF 1.4 million, reflecting the impact of the grant of CHF 3.3 million now approved provisionally by the German ministry of foreign affairs. These are different variables with diverse impacts.

A. Contributions income update for continuing COVID impacts

Contributions income presents a net decrease of about CHF 0.7 million compared with the original budget approved in November 2020. Total actual programme income in 2020 was reported at CHF 14.4 million and could have been higher – at CHF 15.2 million – if needed. Since programme costs were much lower than budgeted and forecast during the year, CHF 600,000 in contribution income was instead applied to the assembly fund.

Total programme income

	CHF million	*decrease*
Revised budget 2021	15.7	(0.7)
Budget 2021	16.4	
Actual 2020*	14.4	
Actual 2019	18.1	
* Plus CHF 0.8 million membership contributions, CHF 15.2 million		

Decreases		
Membership	(0.1)	
EAPPI - COVID impacts	(0.4)	
General programme reductions	(0.3)	
Special projects - timing differences	(0.3)	(1.1)
Increases		
Syria peace process	0.1	
Health and Healing	0.1	
All other increases	0.2	0.4
		(0.7)

It was noted that within the total CHF 1.1 million decreases, about CHF 300,000 concerned timing differences, indicating that the funding contracts will continue into 2022, with those contributions being reported next year.

B. Assembly preparatory activities

The revised budget 2021 includes CHF 1.3 million of grant income from the German ministry of foreign affairs under provisional approval. This in itself presents a slight risk, but a low one, as the provisional approval has been received in writing. The total grant for 2021 from the German ministry of foreign affairs is for CHF 3.3 million, as presented in the outline budget shared with central committee. The total of CHF 1.3 million represents the value which is budgeted to cover preparatory events and other expenses in 2021. A further CHF 2 million will also be applied in 2021 as down payments for the event in 2022. This manner of addressing the funding received is understood to be approved formally by the German ministry of foreign affairs.

With regard to the assembly activities in 2021, direct costs increase by CHF 0.9 million. This represents a complete adjustment in our planning of the work and includes preparatory events, thematic work, as well as assembly publications work and preparation of materials.

The German foreign ministry's grant also covers some staff costs. A requirement that was identified by the executive committee in November 2020 was to achieve a higher level of programme and assembly fund balances at the end of 2021. The revised budget presented indicates CHF 1.4 million as a closing balance, which is more reliable as a plan than the CHF 0.2 million level, which was in the 2021 budget approved in November.

C. Bossey Hotel and Conference centre

For Bossey, the original budget for 20221 presented a deficit of CHF 89,000 deficit. The deficit level has been adjusted and is slightly higher. However the cash flow in the revised budget is actually better, and is always important as a measure in managing this site.

Bossey hotel and conference centre
CHF 000

	net result	depreciation	cash flow
2021 revised budget	(153)	393	240
2021 budget	(89)	280	191
2020	(801)	481	(320)
2019	(85)	465	380
2018	(257)	471	214

The depreciation charges have been adapted slightly, to reflect months of planned closure for specific Bossey facilities, according to the evolving situation. The positive cash flow of CHF 240,000 on this revised budget is satisfactory. There are CHF 250,000 in loans to reimburse each year related to the site, for both Ecumenical Institute and the Bossey hotel and conference centre. This is a good outcome for ongoing continuity, indicating that even with a reduced level of activity, loans may be reimbursed according to contract. A longer term plan will be required for Bossey, if current conditions prevail.

D. Kyoto Financial Plan

Ms Dykes thanked the executive committee members for carefully examining and giving approval to move forward on the recommendations from the steering committee. Much work is being done on the aspects and conditions of the transaction for Kyoto which is still expected to take place this summer. We move forward in hope although the transaction is not yet signed and completed.

In response to a question on the possibility of the significant level of income that could come from a sale, Ms Dykes responded that they are very hopeful for this transaction. The land value is substantial. From the proceeds, the remaining CHF 12 million loan must be paid, as

well as other costs, including taxes. She added that according to the policies set by the central committee, the funds are then strictly defined for reinvestment in the property of the WCC. The buyer who would like to proceed now, has said that the transaction may have to wait for the end of August, till all his funds are organized, therefore there remains uncertainty as to the date. The buyer seems very sincere and serious in his points of discussion but has not kept to the planned dates. This is a slight, but serious, concern. If the transaction cannot take place, the next buyer would be contacted, with the risk that this may not deliver the same level of profitability.

Ms Dykes added a few more remarks on the revised budget:

- There is no revision to capital expenditure budget, set at CHF 767,000;
- The general reserves will be steady under this profile at CHF 7 million ;
- There is no indication of an unrestricted funds surplus so there is not a substantial credit for transfer to assembly. Many programme executives have substantial plans to be achieved in the next quarter of the year, perhaps including some travel and organization of events. However, it may yet prove the case that not all unrestricted funds may be called on for programme work – as occurred in 2020.

Following the discussion, the proposed action that

The executive committee approve the revised budget 2021, with total income of CHF 64.5 million, total expenditure of CHF 39.5 million, and a net increase in funds and reserves of CHF 24.9 million.

was approved by consensus.

Bishop Swenson thanked the committee for their decision on the revised budget, which will help to move forward in the best possible way.

VI. Closing

Dr Agnes Abuom took the floor thanking the executive committee for their active participation in the discussions and the decision-making. She particularly appreciated the reflections on the first online central committee meeting and the suggestions for moving forward.

She quoted the text of Matthew 9:22 when the Lord Jesus Christ encountered the woman:

> Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, “Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well.” And instantly the woman was made well.

She exhorted the executive committee to also take heart. Because of our faith the candle of hope still burns. There will be many more meetings but that is the nature of this transition period because it demands of us to really monitor every step, to discuss together, and agree on the way forward. She repeated the call to “take heart” and remember that we cannot do much without putting Christ at the centre.

She noted that H.E. Metropolitan Seraphim requested that the issue of *metanoia* is considered next time. She suggested he work with Rev. Dr Mikie Roberts on this.

On behalf of the LCC she expressed her thanks again to all the staff, for whose commitment and work the executive committee is very thankful.

As the meeting closed the moderator asked that the committee remember those who have already gone to be with the Father, our Lord God.

Rev. Dr Mikie Roberts led the closing prayer which was a litany of intercessory prayers in the midst of the ongoing spread of COVID-19.

APPENDIX – Participants List

Leadership of the Central Committee

Dr Agnes ABUOM, Anglican Church of Kenya
H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr GENNADIOS OF SASSIMA, Ecumenical Patriarchate
Bishop Mary Ann SWENSON, United Methodist Church
Fr Prof. Dr Ioan SAUCA, World Council of Churches

Members

H.E. Dr Archbishop Abune AREGAWI, Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church
H.E. Archbishop Dr Vicken AYKAZIAN, Armenian Apostolic Church (Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin)
Rev. Dr Hyunju BAE, Presbyterian Church of Korea
Bishop Petra BOSSE-HUBER,
Ms Emily Jane EVANS, Uniting Church in Australia Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland
Mrs Anne GLYNN-MACKOUL, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East
Archpriest Mikhail GOUNDIAEV, Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate)
Rev. Karl JOHNSON, Jamaica Baptist Union
Rev. Martina Viktorie KOPECKÁ, Czechoslovak Hussite Church *(apologies Thursday)*
H.E. Metropolitan Serafim KYKOTIS, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa
Rev. Everdith Yaritza LANDRAU, Presbyterian Church (USA)
Rev. Dr Manhong LIN, China Christian Council
H.E. Metropolitan Zachariah Mar NICHOLOVOS, Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church
H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr NIFON OF TARGOVISTE, Romanian Orthodox Church
Bishop Simo PEURA, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland
Bishop Rex R. B. REYES, Jr., Episcopal Church in the Philippines
Rev. Karin VAN DEN BROEKE, Protestant Church in the Netherlands
Mrs Ana María VELILLA DE MEDIO, Iglesia Evangélica de los Discipulos de Cristo (substitute)

Apologies

Rev. Cora Luisa ANTONIO MATAMOROS, Iglesia Morava en Nicaragua
Rev. Dr Festus Ambe ASANA, Presbyterian Church in Cameroon
Rev. Samson Olasupo Adeniyi AYOKUNLE, Nigerian Baptist Convention
Mr Rudelmar BUENO DE FARIA, Advisor, ACT Alliance
Rev. Taaroanui MARAEA, Église protestante Maohi
Bishop John F. WHITE, African Methodist Episcopal Church

Staff

Mr Douglas L. CHIAL, Director, Office of the General Secretariat
Ms Catherine CHRIST-TAHA, Conference Office
Ms Elaine DYKES, Finance Director
Ms Marianne EJDERSTEN, Communications Director
Mr Marc-Henri HEINIGER, Assembly Logistics Coordinator
Mr Georges LEMOPOULOS, Consensus Consultant
Rev. Dr Odair Pedroso MATEUS, Interim Deputy General Secretary
Prof. Dr Isabel Apawo PHIRI, Deputy General Secretary
Mr Peter PROVE, CCIA Director
Ms Karina VARTANOVA, Finance Manager

Interpreters

Ms María BAILE RUBIO
Ms Maria BECERRA
Ms Georgina PICCIONE THOMAS
Ms Ms Pamela VALDES